Dear Maryland Interscholastic Cycling League Community,

“I wish they had that when we were in school.”

This is something we’ve heard hundreds of times now. It is uttered by someone at least once in every single conversation we have with people introducing Maryland Interscholastic Cycling League (MICL) and what we do. We heard it so much that we put it across the front of our charter member shirts. People say it because, as adults, they understand the magnitude of the value that riding brings to their lives, and they all wish they had done more of it, or found biking earlier in life. Hindsight is 20/20, they say.

When we hatched a plan in the Winter of 2016/17 to launch a Maryland league via the National Interscholastic Cycling Association (NICA), we both already understood a lot about mountain biking. We knew all about the rewards of bike racing, the welcoming community of trail stewards, and the joys of bike retail and selling the stuff dreams are made of. We’d each been following along with the growth of NICA and knew it would be good for our state.

The bid process was rigorous, and opened our eyes to the truth about NICA being a serious comprehensive youth development program, not just a fun way to ride bikes with kids. The more we learned about the myriad details of running a league, the more certain we became of success. Not only because of the success of NICA leagues elsewhere, but because we saw that we’d be bringing a program full of depth and built on research and proven practices. Waiting for it all was a vibrant mountain biking community across Maryland poised and ready to welcome NICA to town with open arms. Timing is everything, they say.

What NICA did not prepare us for—could not have prepared us for—is the front-row-seat experience of seeing the effect of this league. The NICA effect. It’s the coaches who tell us endless stories about their kids at practices and in races achieving the impossible and surpassing their goals.

It’s the parents who pull us aside or send us emails to marvel about the changes they’ve seen in their kids at home, and the fun they’re having riding together. It’s the gratitude we get from volunteers who show up over and over again to work for free all day—and thank us for the experience at the end. It’s seeing our sponsors and supporters attending their first NICA race and witnessing their light bulb moments of comprehending just how much their support means to so many. And it’s the big-smiling, high-fiving, laughing and cheering student-athletes who assemble en masse at our events and push themselves and their teammates to achieve. THIS is the league. YOU are the league.

Thank you for being a part of the creation of the Maryland Interscholastic Cycling League. We could not have done it without you. We won’t rest long though, and we need you to continue to help us by spreading the word about MICL to your family, friends, and coworkers. We want to double the number of student-athletes we serve in 2019. We want to line up 1,000 kids at a race in Maryland one day soon. We can get there together.

This is only the beginning, we say.

Thank you,

Jonathan Posner, Co-Director
Maryland Interscholastic Cycling League

Fred Powell, Co-Director
Maryland Interscholastic Cycling League
ABOUT NICA

FOUNDED IN 2009, the National Interscholastic Cycling Association (“NICA”) develops interscholastic mountain biking programs for student-athletes across the United States. NICA provides leadership, services and governance for regional leagues to produce quality mountain bike events, and supports every student-athlete in the development of strong mind, strong body and strong character through interscholastic cycling.
ABOUT MICL

FORMED IN 2017, as part of the National Interscholastic Cycling Association (NICA), Maryland Interscholastic Cycling League (MICL) seeks to fill a niche for those whose needs are not fully met by traditional school sports. As a premiere youth development organization, we know mountain bikes are the perfect vehicle to transport kids to new levels of self-confidence, personal growth, engagement with nature and each other.

OUR GOAL: #MOREKIDSONBIKES
School and community-based teams have formed around the state, with more coming in 2019. Teams are open to any interested student in grades 6-12 and welcome diversity in ability, ethnicity, gender and orientation.

As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, MICL's budget relies heavily upon the support of our participants, donors, volunteers and sponsors. Your support will directly impact our league operations and help MICL produce top-level youth events, provide coach training, including safety and licensing, scholarships, event permitting, leadership training and insurance.

Beyond financial support, the gift of your time and expertise will create additional experiences for our student-athletes. Volunteers are central to the league’s success. Become a part of the Maryland mountain bike revolution and start changing kids’ lives today.
THIS IS JUST T
THE BEGINNING.
## Year in Review

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Statistics</th>
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NOBODY RIDES A BENCH EVERYBODY RIDES A BIKE
As a former high school athlete, Coach Deanna Wills understands how important team sports can be for kids. Her 16-year-old son, Trace, was not interested in playing traditional high school sports, but he found his place as a strong athlete through mountain biking. He competed with support of their local bike shop, but it was still a relatively solo experience. Something was missing.

When news broke that Maryland would be starting a NICA league, the Wills family was introduced to MICL directors, Jon and Fred, through our friends at Mid-Atlantic Off-Road Enthusiasts (MORE). Deanna recognized this was the opportunity her family had been waiting for; her son would no longer be a team of one. She was hopeful a member of the biking community would step up to get a team started in her area. When that didn’t happen, and despite her own lack of biking knowledge, she and her husband, Eric, decided to attend MICL’s inaugural season’s leaders summit to start their own team.

Suddenly, Deanna found herself experiencing “imposter syndrome.” She found herself thinking, “What am I doing? I’m a phony! I don’t even ride mountain bikes!” At the summit, she was coached through a biking 101 session and had her epiphany. “This is more than biking. I can teach these kids. They can teach me. I CAN do this!”

The Wills family imagined there would be a handful of kids on their team—their son and a few of his friends. “We put flyers at the bike shop, I posted on Facebook, and we quickly grew to 12 student-athletes from seven schools. I wore my jersey to my elementary school job before the first race and got swarmed by parents looking to be involved next year.”

Some of the student-athletes were friends, but most of them were not. “They are truly a team,” she said. “They immediately had a connection and found common ground.” Deanna was uncertain of the impact the team experience might have on participating families, but she says the kids have built their own community, and their parents are actively engaged in it.

Deanna was uncertain of the impact the team experience might have on participating families, but she says the kids have built their own community, and their parents are actively engaged in it.

Deanna said her own family has come a long way since the leaders summit, and her husband recently expressed his gratitude to their son for getting their family involved in the Maryland league. “He thanked my son and said, ‘I’m so happy you do this, so I can do this,’ and that’s how I feel, too.”

She adds, “The response from everyone has been so positive. I never would have imagined it would be this emotional, but it is. I am not cheering for one kid anymore. I am cheering for 12. They’re all my kids now.”
FINDING HIS INNER ATHLETE AND FINDING HIS PLACE

JACK MULLIS
Student-athlete | Montgomery County sMORE’s Composite 6th-Grade Boys

TRINA MULLIS
Coach and Mom | Montgomery County sMORE’s Composite

Over the past several years, Trina Mullis and her husband, Jacob, have tried to help their son, Jack, 12, get excited about sports. They tried activities such as soccer and cross country, but he remained unenthusiastic. Upon news of the MICL launch, Trina decided to volunteer her time as a coach and try out a more non-traditional athletic experience for their son.

“Since my husband and I love mountain biking,” Trina says, “we figured it was a good opportunity to try to get him involved. Jack was reluctant at first, but once he went to practice a few times and got to know the group, he really started to come out of his shell.” She adds that it was the first time Jack was genuinely enthusiastic about an athletic experience.

Trina and Jacob could see a change in him almost immediately. Jack shares, “I wanted to ride bikes after school, hang out with friends, and maybe make some new friends.” At one of the first team meetings, while other kids were stating their goals of improved skills and faster times, Jack made a clear declaration for his MICL journey—to ride bikes and make friends. After joining the sMORE’s team, he hasn’t looked back. “Now I’m friends with everyone on the team.”

Jack is enjoying the structure of practice—the coaches gather the athletes for trail rides and skills development. He has found comfort in honing the more technical abilities in a controlled environment with mentorship from the more experienced riders. His coaches have helped him find a level of comfort by practicing their race “ready” position and riding over plastic tubes to mimic roots on the trail.

When he first started riding a few short months ago, Jack says, “I couldn’t go very fast and I wasn’t that good. But now I’ve learned I can go faster and do better. I’m less scared to ride than I was before.”

As he gains confidence, Jack enjoys the freedom and independence of riding alone, but his favorite thing about riding is being with his teammates, friends, and parents. Trina adds, “This has been an overwhelmingly positive social experience for Jack, with the extra benefits of getting outside and becoming more physically fit. We are so proud of the work he has put in and couldn’t be happier that he looks forward to every event. He enjoys being supported by his teammates and also cheering for them along the way.”
As a transplant from the West, 13-year-old Kaitlyn Koehler was eager to find a competitive mountain biking opportunity in her new Mid-Atlantic home. Coming from the booming outdoor sports scene in Boise, Idaho, the Koehler family had some trouble finding a community of like-minded bike enthusiasts nearby. They reached out to the Pennsylvania NICA league and were introduced to league directors, Jon and Fred, at MICL’s first-ever informational “Dirt Tour” shop meeting. Kaitlyn was first in line to sign up and compete in the league’s inaugural season!

A seasoned rider and true adventure seeker, Kaitlyn is bringing her BMX skill set and love of shredding downhill to mountain biking. “Most of the time,” she says, “you see the guys riding and they’re doing all these cool tricks, but girls can do that, too!”

She is working towards the top step of the podium for next year. “I got second place at one race and third at another; my goal is to get first place next year.” Kaitlyn also plans to continue honing her skills in the off-season by competing in in other cross-country races.

In addition to focusing on her own skills, Kaitlyn can often be found rallying the troops as part of MICL’s “Girls Riding Together” (GRiT) community. She always encourages others to get out there and ride.

Laura Gray is Kaitlyn’s coach, a GRiT leader, and MICL core staff member. Laura shares, “It is important for girls to see other girls riding. So often, we teach young women they need to be perfect instead of fearless, that they should stay away from things that seem hard. Kaitlyn understands the impact we can have on each other and she sets a positive example.”

Not only does her team compete together, they have also built strong, genuine relationships and established traditions off their bikes. Before each race, they attend a team dinner with their immediate families. At practice, they focus on drills, work on fitness, and play games like bike soccer, which Kaitlyn says is harder than it sounds! The teammates stay connected, despite attending different schools, by challenging each other to contests like wearing their team jerseys to school and getting as many people as possible to take selfies with them.

“There are great relationships on the team,” Kaitlyn says, “We all pitch in and cheer each other on. We all congratulate each other. We really are like a mountain biking family.”
Maryland’s regional mountain bike community has a long and storied tradition of strong competitive riders, and 16-year-old Ian Schwing might be the “next big thing.” Winner of MICL’s varsity category (in only 10th grade!), and starting to compete against adults in non-league races like Shenandoah Mountain100, Ian is looking like a real phenom.

Once Ian started tearing up his front lawn on a bike at age 8, his parents decided it was time to get him on the trails and he’s been riding ever since. “I have two sisters who play lacrosse, so our family is extended on weekends, supporting all of us. With so much going on, biking was something I could do for myself. It gave me a sense of freedom—it’s my escape, my time, my peace.” If he’s not on a bike, you will find him fishing with his dad, surfing, snowboarding, or enjoying time with friends and family. “I don’t like video games,” Ian says. “I just want to be outside.”

Ian is lucky enough to attend Mount Saint Joseph High School in Baltimore—the first team signed up in the Maryland league for MICL’s inaugural season. The school administrators already had a significant number of students interested in mountain biking via a club sport, and were excited to utilize NICA’s policies and organization to formalize their team. Now, the school has one of the largest and most diverse teams in the league, encouraging students from all walks of life and levels of ability to participate. At Mount Saint Joseph, from morning announcements to classes to sporting events, it’s customary to begin each activity with a prayer. Ian’s leadership helps ensure their MICL team upholds that school tradition. “Before the races, we start with a chant—it’s fun because we all scream at each other and get pumped up. Then, we say our prayer. It’s pretty powerful.”

In school, kids often approach Ian and say things like, “Can I be as fast as you?” or “I want to do that!” The ever-humble Ian simply responds with his infectious smile and says, “You can!”

Though he recognizes that he is one of the fastest competitors on the MICL race course, he understands the true spirit of
the mountain biking community. Every student-athlete on his team has their own set of goals for biking. It goes way beyond winning. Some kids are striving for longer distances. Some kids just want to be part of the team. Some hope to try something new for the first time. Ian muses, “Who am I to tell people they can’t do something they set their mind to? I tell them, ‘You just have to devote your time to it and believe in yourself.’ There are no tryouts, everyone’s welcome. No matter what, you will get better. That’s the best motivation to stick with it.”

After crushing the course, Ian can often be found lingering at the exit chute at MICL races, hugging friends and high fiving his competition. “I look up to the adults I race with and hope to be as good as they are one day. It was striking that they immediately supported me and became good friends. Other sports can be hyper-competitive and everyone just wants to be better than you. In biking, you learn to look out for each other. When I race with adults, there’s always someone willing to help you out. I want to help bring the same spirit when I’m racing with my peers.”

Outside of their sanctioned MICL practices and races, Ian and his friends can be found riding the difficult trails at Patapsco Valley State Park, knowing camaraderie, coupled with those technical challenges, are how they can all get better together. “If someone falls back or they’re not having a good time, we always put them up front to lead the ride so we can lift them up.”

It is clear that mountain biking is Ian’s passion—he does it every day he possibly can—and there is no place he would rather be. Ian’s eyes light up when he talks about his future. “I hope to mountain bike in college; I will mountain bike forever.”
MARYLAND HAS GRiT

Girls Riding Together (GRiT) is a nationwide effort to recruit and retain female student-athletes and coaches in NICA programs. Currently, girls represent 20% of NICA’s overall national student-athlete population. GRiT seeks to increase female participation in NICA programs to 33% overall by 2023. With help from the Walton Family Foundation, a number of other sponsors, and support from NICA leagues across the country, GRiT’s mission is to provide fair treatment, equal access, opportunity, advancement and elimination of barriers to encourage participation for all.

MICL is proud to have high levels of female engagement in our inaugural season, with 18.4% female student-athlete participation and 27% female coach participation. We are committed to increasing the national average by getting #moregirlsonbikes at home in Maryland!
Please note: The unaudited financials presented represent the MICL budget for our inaugural season, and span from league inception through November 5, 2018. For more information about MICL financials, please contact League Director, Jon Posner at jon@marylandmtb.org.
We are deeply appreciative of everyone who donated to MICL in our first year. Your contributions are a meaningful endorsement of our mission and led to a successful launch of the Maryland League.

Anonymous M
Anonymous M
Anonymous M
Dan Abate M
Morgan Arnone
Dan Atkins M
Ashley and Christopher Bacco
Bryan Barnes M
Michael Berry M
Bike Doctor Frederick I
Bike Doctor Waldorf I
Michael J. Birner M
Meghan Blundon
TJ Bonner M
Brian Boring M
Jacqueline Bowie M
Bob Caverly M
Stephanie Chall and Christopher Lane M I
Friends of Chall-Lane
Julie Childers I
Mark Cleaver M
Robert and Lisa Compton M
Mary Gail Compton M
Eric Crawford, MD M
Eric Crawford I
The Cycle Mill of Ellicott City I
Traci Davis M
Tim Delss M
Thomas and Kim Doyle
Duo Signage + Graphics S I
Chris Eatough M
Elevated Trail Design, LLC
Bigfoot Endurance / Evan Calvert M
Patrick M. Felton M
Jerry Fonsheim M
Dave Freesland M
Jack Hanlon M
John Hargreaves M
Steven Harper M
Matthew Hellmers M
David J. Hickson M
Joe Hikel M
Tyler Hill I
Hill Killer Apparel, LLC S I
Joe Hohn M
Horizon Foundation of Howard County, Inc. G
John Hostetter III M
Kerri Ann Isenstadt I
Scott Jacoby M
Joe’s Bike Shop S I
Kathy Judson M
Woof Cycling / Jason Kamps I
James Kelley M
Nikki Kelley M I
KELLY Benefit Strategies S
Jackson Koepke M
Brandon Krinsky M
Scotty Landes M
Adam Lewandowski M
Samantha Lewandowski M
Paul Lombardo M
Pat D. Looney
Vic Madrid M I
Jo Maralit M
Michael Marinaro M
Bryan M. McMillan I
Libbey Sheldon and Chris Merriam M
Cheri Merrihew M
Mid-Atlantic Off-Road Enthusiasts (MORE) S
Jim R. Miller, Jr. M
Dan Mooney M
Dan Morrissey M
Andrew Eric Mueller M
National Interscholastic Cycling Association (NICA) G
Andrew Neal M
Antonio Paterniti I
Chad and Becky Pfommer
Craig Pool M
David and Nancy Posner M
Jonathan and Tracy Posner M I
Fred and Natalie Powell M I
Michele and Steve Pringle I
Joey Pulone I
Quality Bicycle Products / Patrick Gore-Traill I
Race Pace Bicycles I
REI I
REI-Columbia I
Ben Reisse M
Monica Reisse I
Nancy and Bradley Ritter M
Ernest Rodriguez M
Drew Sandberg M
Diane Schuster M
Dan Shaw M
George Shriver M
Todd TTB Skopie M
Squirt USA, Inc. S I
Marla Streib M
Gretchen Townsend M
Joe Traill and Katie Gore M
Trek Bicycle S
Up the Bay Productions I
Erin Wells M
Tony Williams M
Angie Williams I
Chris Young I
Mark Zaragoza M
Nick Zohdi M

M CHARTER MEMBER | S SPONSOR | G GRANT | I IN-KIND
The backbone of our league is our core staff and volunteers. These are the people who showed up and did the work to make MICL a reality for nearly 300 student-athletes in year one.
STAFF + VOLUNTEERS

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Marty Lynott C
Tracy Lynott v C
Jamie Machiesky C
Vis Madrid C
Jason Mah C
Emmanuel Mairesse V
Luka Mairesse V
Mike Malone C
Michael Marinaro V
Michele Mark C
William Mattson C
Roz McCarthy V
Emily McDonald V N
Jennifer McFalls C
Marielena McGuire C
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Drew Sandberg C
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Michael Saverino C
Carson Scharf C
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Sean Schmit C
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Dan Shaw C
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Jeremy Shutt C
Raquel Shutt C
Annie Simcoe C
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Jon Smith V
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Scott Striegel V
Jill Sturm V
Paul Sturm V C
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Brigitta Tambeaux V C
David Tambeaux V C
Brigitta Tambeaux V C
Bert Taylor V
Robert Taylor V
Sarah Thomson V N
Carroll Thumel V
Julia Thumel C
Paige Thumel V
Virginia To V
Adrienne Tolentino C
Mike Tolentino C
David Townsend C
Gretchen Townsend V C
Joe Trail V
Nick Triandos V
Jason Troxell V
Jess Tubb C
Ben Tufford V N
Brad Virgin V C
Zachary Warnick C
Brandon Webb C
Christopher Wells C
Erin Wells V C
Ray Whitney V
Stefan Wiesen C
Jason Wiley V
Angela Williams C
Tony Williams C
Deanna Wills V C
Eric Wills C
Jerel Wilson V N
Cathy Witt-Buccheri V
Donna Wojno V
Mike Wojtczak V
Andrew Wood C

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